## Centre for Narrative Research

## School of Social Sciences, University of East London

***To Think is To Experiment, Postgraduate Research Day***

**Wednesday, 26th April, 2017**, **University Square Stratford**,

Room: USS 2.12

Directions: <http://www.universitysquarestratford.ac.uk/find-us.htm>

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| **10.00 – 10.20** | ***Welcome and Introductions*** |
| **10.20 - 10.50** | **Siyanda Ndlovu Memorial Lecture**  **“Is that what I see everyday”: Life stories and Photo-elicited Diaries (PEDs) of a severe Chronic Illness, namely ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis), also known as CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome)**  Dr Sharon Gallagher, University of East London |
| **10.50 – 11.10** | **Personal Narratives of Progressive Lawyers:**  **Methodological Challenges presented by Reflexivity**  Jacqueline Kinghan, UCL & Goldsmiths, University of London |
| **11.10 - 11.30** | **Migration plan and integration strategies among Bangladeshi migrants in Rome and London – a narrative approach**  Valeria Giannuzzi, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Tijuana, Mexico |
| **11.30 – 11.50** | ***Coffee Break*** |
| **11.50 – 12.10** | **Personal, interpersonal, positional and ideological: reflections on choosing an analytical framework to explore gendered identity in non-professional carers**  Jenny Young, Edinburgh Napier University |
| **12.10 – 12.30** | **Life History research method**  Mare Sadam, Talinn University |
| **12.30 – 12.50** | **Early Year practitioners’ narratives of child poverty – an analysis of focus groups**  Sandra Lyndon, University of Sussex |
| **12.50 – 14.00** | ***Lunch Break*** |
| **14.00 - 14.20** | **Substance Misuse and the Family: Narratives of Siblings**  Avril Sandie Gabriel, University of East London |
| **14.20 - 14.40** | **Tracking stories in social media: Ethical and methodological challenges**  Mikka Lene Pers-Højholt, King’s College London |
| **14.40 –15.00** | **Exploring the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Later Life**  Jemma Khamidullina, University of East London |
| **15.00 -15.15** | ***Coffee Break*** |
| **15.15 -15.35** | **Narrating Equality: Analysing the narration of simplification in the becoming of the Equality Act 2010**  James Beresford, University of Leeds |
| **15.35 – 15.55** | **Thick description and fine-grained analysis of narrative practices in broadcast news**  Gilles Merminod, University of Lausanne |
| **16.00 – 16.30** | Discussion over drinks |
|  | Poster **Narratives of failure: on the cultural construction of crisis**  Nicole Muller, Technical University of Dresden |

**Abstracts:**

***“Is that what I see everyday”: Life stories and Photo-elicited Diaries (PEDs) of a severe Chronic Illness, namely ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis), also known as CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome)***

**Sharon Gallagher, University of East London**

Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) remains a contentious category; along with its umbrella term of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS). This chronic illness has produced medical contestation, political uncertainty and social scepticism. My study was based on seven females/two males, who had been diagnosed and experienced the often severe effects of ME/cfs. The presentation will reflect on the benefits of employing life story accounts with Photo-Elicited Diaries (PEDs). I argue that textual accounts alone may not fully describe and illustrate the rich complexities of living with a chronic illness. Nine life stories and eight subsequent PEDs were analysed by employing a critical discourse and narrative analyses to the bio-political and socio-cultural contexts. This transdisciplinary approach was theoretically underpinned by a kaleidoscopic framework that examined the discursive, material and relational aspects of living with ME/cfs. The stories detailed life experiences, before illness and the processes and practices of becoming diagnosed and managing a life with chronic illness and exemplified, for one participant, the tipping points of “my ME world”. The PEDs encapsulated the nuances and emotive qualities of surviving, recovering and relapsing with ME/cfs. Their life stories and photo-narrations, often adopted metaphorical terms. One photo-narration described “my Dorian Gray room” to illustrate “hidden frailties” and another participant her - “makeup bag” to symbolise the tools needed to construct her healthy “mask”. My theoretical approach identified how the nature of chronic illness is a complex play of language, space and representation for constructing ways of ‘doing’ illness, whilst ‘being’ ill. This presentation joins others, for a call within social and disability research, to address the issues associated with impairments and goes further to advocate for employing PEDs as an exemplary method for understanding the complexities of living with chronic illness.

***Personal Narratives of Progressive Lawyers: Methodological Challenges presented by Reflexivity***

**Jacqueline Kinghan, UCL & Goldsmiths, University of London**

This paper draws on the pilot phase of an AHRC funded doctoral study that relies on narrative research methodology to primarily investigate how, and why, lawyers pursue social change. The study explores progressive lawyers’ own perceptions of the work they do and, in turn, how these perceptions influence their strategic decision-making and their relationships with social activists, with other lawyers and with the state itself. The aim of the paper will be to address methodological challenges presented by reflexivity and explore how they have been accommodated in the research process. Drawing on examples from interviews and fieldwork conducted thus far, I will explore issues of power and subjectivity in relation to co-creation of personal narratives. I will also present some initial interview analysis in order to further reflect on the interplay between constructivist and critical approaches and my own role in analysing and connecting personal narratives as a participant-researcher. The aim of the paper will to outline in particular the ways in which ‘methodological anxiety’ as to subjectivity might be overcome in order to clarify the underlying theoretical and epistemological approaches of the research project and ultimately enhance thematic analysis.

***Migration Plan and integration strategies among Bangladeshi migrants in Rome and London – a narrative approach***

**Valeria Giannuzzi, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Tijuana, Mexico**

**(Currently based in Rome, Italy)**

This contribution aims to present some of the ongoing analysis of a PhD research about migration plan and integration strategies among Bangladeshi migrants in Rome and Italian-Bangladeshi in London. The main interest concerns migrants’ migratory experience perception and how it could affect three key aspects: behaviour, different integration strategies once in the receiving country and the transformation along the time of their life projects.

How to translate the interpretation the person makes out of the world into actions and behaviour? How *to read* a “migration plan” and its own expectations into everyday life, once in the receiving country? How does migration policies and geopolitical equilibrium play a role into individual and families’ choices?

The research is currently at an early stage of analysis; the presentation will focus mostly on a reflection concerning applied narrative methodology, and will address the above mentioned questions by concentrating on the narratives of Bangladeshi migrants in Italy and Italian-Bangladeshi in United Kingdom, with special attention on recent historical events, including immigration policies and Brexit, and how they may deeply affect individual life choices.

***Personal, interpersonal, positional and ideological: reflections on choosing an analytical framework to explore gendered identity in non-professional carers***

**Jenny Young, Edinburgh Napier University**

In the UK approximately one million people provide unpaid care to someone due to their cancer diagnosis. Research in this field has predominately focused on female carers. Therefore, less is known about the male carer experience. The aim of this study is to explore what it is like to be a male and care for a partner with a diagnosis of breast cancer. Recruitment began in January 2017. Each participant (n=15) will be interviewed three times over the course of a year. There are two broad theoretical and philosophical approaches that will underpin the analysis. The first is social constructivism. The second is cognitive psychology drawing particularly on the work of Bruner. Murray’s narrative framework will be used as the guiding framework to analyse the data. Murray’s framework examines storied experiences focusing on four elements within the narratives: personal, interpersonal, positional and ideological. This presentation will reflect on the decision to use Murray’s framework to elicit understanding around male identity and the cancer carer experience. Strengths and limitations to the approach will be discussed.

***Life History research method***

**Mare Sadam, Talinn University**

Explicitness of an analysis process of empirical data is one of the main criteria in empirical validity of qualitative research. Life History method as a way to explore human experience in different conditions has been used more than a century and it has become more valued during recent decades. The presentation is based on an ongoing research and focuses on the use of Life History method, which is developed by Ivor F. Goodson. The aim of the research is to study the empirical data analysis process. Goodson has been using the method of portrayal for analysing the data and presenting evidences to readers. Goodson writes about respondent validation, however since the process of analysing and interpreting data is not prescribed, the procedural as well as interpretational validation is not defined. Due to that in this presentation data analyse process was examined on the basis of seven scientific articles, where Life History method has been used. The result shows that the data analyse process was rather not explicit in most of the cases. Therefore some suggestions will be discussed in the presentation for making analysis process more explicit with the aim of increasing the procedural and interpretation validity.

Articles examined:

1. Biott, C., Moos, L., & Moller, J. (2001). Studying Headteachers' Professional Lives: Getting the Life History. *Scandinavian Journal Of Educational Research*, 45(4), 395-410.
2. Duckworth, V. )., & Ade-Ojo, G. ). (2016). Journey Through Transformation: A Case Study of Two Literacy Learners. *Journal Of Transformative Education*, 14(4), 285-304. doi:10.1177/1541344616644682
3. Choi, P. L., & Tang, S. F. (2009). Teacher commitment trends: Cases of Hong Kong teachers from 1997 to 2007. *Teaching And Teacher Education*, 25767-777. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2009.01.005

***Early Year practitioners’ narratives of child poverty – an analysis of focus groups***

**Sandra Lyndon, University of Sussex**

My doctoral thesis focuses on early year practitioners’ narratives of child poverty in England. The research design includes a series of focus groups with practitioners from a range of early year settings, such as, nursery schools, private day care and children’s centres. This presentation will critically explore the analytic process with a focus on how early year practitioners co-construct their narratives within a group context. The approach draws on dialogic/performance analysis, ‘a broad and varied interpretative approach’ which ‘interrogates how talk among speakers is interactively (dialogically) produced and performed as narrative’ (Riessman, 2008, p.105). The interrogation will explore how Andrew’s (2014) concept of micro narratives, the co-production of stories between participants, and macro narratives, societal and cultural understandings, can be used to understand co-constructions of child poverty. Consideration will be given to how identity is performed within the focus groups, including early year practitioners’ and the researcher’s subject positions. Consideration will also be given to ethical challenges that arise from giving an active voice to the researcher within the analytic process.

***Substance Misuse and the Family: Narratives of Siblings***

**Avril Sandie Gabriel, University of East London**

This study seeks to explore the narratives of those with a sibling who misuses illegal substances. Much of the current literature focuses on the experience of the person misusing substances, partners or parents (when considering the impact on the family). I conducted semi-structured interviews with six participants, audio recording and transcribing them verbatim. Through narrative analysis, my research aims to explore and give voice to the experience of these siblings, considering family dynamics, changes in sibling relationships, support needed/accessed, stigma and beliefs about substance misuse. As I begin the process of analysis I reflect on emerging themes, considering how the impact of my personal experience (as a sibling) and professional work within a substance misuse service shapes my role as a researcher. I discuss my epistemological approach, ethical dilemmas faced, and struggles with alternating between text and context during the process; trying to focus on details of individual experiences without losing the context.

***Tracking stories in social media: Ethical and methodological challenges***

**Mikka Lene Pers-Højholt, King’s College London**

“Life streaming”, denoting the continuous sharing of personal materials with networked audiences in social media has become a means by which people establish intimacies and create and maintain social relationships (Lange 2009; Marwick 2013; Pybus 2015; Raun 2016). Recent interactionally-oriented narrative scholarship suggests that affordances and constraints having to do with the interactivity, distribution and reach of social media content and the porous boundaries between communicative contexts in social media significantly impact upon the interactional dynamics and formal features of storytelling in these environments. This research suggests that stories told in social media can unfold across segments, across media platforms and offline contexts and can implicate a broad range of tellers (Dayter 2015; Georgalou 2015; Georgakopoulou 2014; 2015a, 2015b, 2015d, 2016a, 2016b; Page 2010, 2012, 2015). This makes tellership and ownership of stories told in social media ambiguous, fluid and highly contested and can lead to unforeseen and hard to control uptakes and amplifications of stories. Drawing on my ongoing PhD project, I discuss methodological and ethical challenges related to ownership of user data that arise when studying multi-participatory, crossplatform storytelling activities. Specifically, I address questions concerning researchers’ entitlement to trace, collect, analyse, store, and redistribute personal information shared in publicly accessible social media environments.

***Exploring the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Later Life***

**Jemma Khamidullina, University of East London**

As we move towards an evermore Internet-communicating society, the issues of access, paths to digital engagement and empowering practices for the rapidly ageing population are becoming more and more pressing. The aim of my research project is to contribute to the literature relating to the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in later life and the role of ICTs in promoting healthy ageing, including communication, socialisation, and community living in later life. My research explores these issues within a specific social and local context of a remote community with a high ratio of older population. In terms of theoretical framework and methodology, my project relies on narrative inquiry and ethnographic methods, making use of semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observations and other ethnographic approaches.

***Narrating Equality: Analysing the narration of simplification in the becoming of the Equality Act 2010***

**James Beresford, University of Leeds**

This paper contributes to the small but growing field of narrative policy analysis, focusing on the multiplicity of ways the Equality Act 2010 has been narrated by those involved in its becoming. The last major piece of UK Equality legislation, the Equality Act 2010 combined all the previous UK anti-discrimination legislation into a single bill in the name of simplification and making the application of anti-discrimination law less complex. It provided a single set of regulations and framework which public bodies had to adhere to. The paper traces the way legislation and policy is narrated in order to identify the previous legislative framework as inadequate and simplification therefore necessary. Drawing upon narrative interviews with policy practitioners involved in the legislation’s assemblage, as well as narrative textual analysis of policy documents, parliamentary debates and media pieces, the paper looks to how different narratives of the Act circulate and the political labour performed. In particular it will look to the way narrative policy analysis can help to understand how policies and different iterations of policies become characters in narratives, and how the construction of such characters is mobilised to justify narratives of simplification.

***Thick description and fine-grained analysis of narrative practices in broadcast news***

**Gilles Merminod, University of Lausanne**

Drawing on linguistic ethnography (Rampton et al., 2015) and narrative analysis (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2015), my paper reflects on how an ethnographic thick description combined with a fine-grained linguistic analysis enhances our understanding of narrative practices in broadcast news. To do so, I focus on a case study: the making of a news story about the crash of an aircraft in Indonesia that was broadcast in the News Bulletin of the French-speaking television channel for the noon edition on March 7th 2007.

As we will see, media practitioners orient themselves towards a coherent recount of what happened. Nevertheless, thick description and fine-grained analysis will enable us to see how and why media practitioners move from narrative practices that “present one consistent logic of experience” (Ochs, 2004: 276) to narrative practices that “explor[e] alternative understandings of experience” (Ochs, 2004: 278) in order to solve story-making problems and provide a coherent story to the audience. Consequently, telling stories in broadcast news does not only entail the ability to transmit what happened but also the ability to interpret it.

De Fina, Anna & Georgakopoulou, Alexandra (2015). *The Handbook of Narrative Analysis*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ochs, Elinor (2004). Narrative Lessons. In Duranti, Alessandro (ed.) *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 269-289.

Rampton, Ben, Maybin, Janet & Roberts, Celia (2015), “Theory and method in linguistic ethnography”. In Snell, Julia, Shaw, Sara & Copland, Fiona (eds), *Linguistic Ethnography. Interdisciplinary Explorations*. New York, Palgrave McMillan, 14-50.

**Poster**

***Narratives of failure: on the cultural construction of crisis***

**Nicole Muller, Technical University of Dresden**

The dissertation project investigates narratives of personal failure based on qualitative biographic narrative interviews. From a narrative perspective failure can be conceptualised as a breach of continuity in the structure of the self. In a structural dimension it is a disruption of order in the ›trajectories of the self‹ and a ›dead end‹ in designated areas of life. While narrating is thus a means to integrate otherwise disturbing events into an existing framework of meaning, failure is a special case in which the threshold is too high so that eventually the structure needs to be adjusted and the self needs to be ›rewritten‹.

The theoretical and methodical foundation of the project is the idea of narrative identity. The detailed textual analysis is conducted with a set of different tools: the main dimensions are a combination of metaphor and positioning analysis and – more importantly – an analysis of agency and narrative structure in order to identify the causal conjunctions and other relevant criteria. In particular, the analysis of agency plays a key role in the context of this project and is understood as the analysis of specific ways of talking about the human capacity to act to examine how people conceptualise their own and others’ power over their life.